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A SKILLED ADMINISTRATOR FOR THE TOUGH CIA JOB

A MIABLE, red-haired William F. Raborn, Jr., is an old hand at difficult assignments. Now, in assuming the directorship of the Central Intelligence agency, the retired vice-admiral may be on the spot more than ever before. It is a tough job and those who have held it have frequently been targets of congressional and public criticism.

It strikes us, however, that Admiral Raborn is well qualified on the basis of his naval record and the qualities required to run the CIA. While Raborn is not as well known to the public as McCone was from his various top government positions, the admiral has been widely recognized for his brilliant work in the key post of developing the Polaris missile-submarine. He ramrodded the program from idea to reality in less than four years—nearly three years ahead of the original schedule.

For this work Raborn was honored with the Collier trophy given for "the greatest achievement in aeronautics or astronautics in America." He was also promoted to 3-star rank, awarded the Distinguished Service medal and named deputy chief of naval operations for research and development. But his chief distinction came from the unofficial title he earned as "father of the Polaris submarine." It was a team effort that produced the mighty weapons system now integrated into the nation's deterrent force. But it was Raborn who made the team function superbly.

Now he is challenged to do as well with the CIA. He does not necessarily have to be a spy-master of proved expertise in the cloak-and-dagger art. The post he takes over is largely administrative. Raborn has proved himself to be a fine administrator. It is also important that he get along well with Congress, some of whose members have developed a critical attitude toward the CIA. For eight years in his last two Navy assignments, Raborn was known for his skill in dealing with congressional committees.

In structure the CIA resembles an iceberg, only one-eighth of whose bulk is visible. The agency that compiles and evaluates intelligence data has to operate in the shadows so much that it cannot even reply to its critics openly. The budget for the CIA is kept secret for security reasons and Congress has no close supervisory authority over the organization. Reportedly the CIA has had both its successes, such as in Guatemala, and its failures, such as at the Bay of Pigs.

Now Admiral Raborn is President Johnson's personal choice for the sensitive assignment. We assume that the President sized up all the alternate candidates carefully and made his final selection convinced that "Red" Raborn is the best man available.

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